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ABSTRACT

This monograph is intended for use by State education agencies (SEA's) and urban school systems as a guide to facilitate SEA/Urban school system efforts to identify urban school system needs; and to develop and to describe the roles of the SEA in assisting these systems to plan and effect improvements in education. The report also develops an operational plan, which includes a description of specific organizational structuring; and new or improved SEA/Urban school system relationships, strategies, processes, and procedures needed for implementing and carrying out the roles and actions required by both the State education agency and the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified. (Author)

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# IMPROVING COOPERATION BETWEEN STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES AND URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Report of a Special Study
Sponsored by the Project

IMPROVING STATE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Denver, Colorado
December, 1972

EA 005 191

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## FOREWORD

This publication is a product of the State Education Agency/Urban School Systems aspect of the project, Improving State Leadership in Education, and is intended for use by state education agencies (SEA's) and urban school systems as a guide to facilitate coordinated SEA/Urban School System efforts to:

1. Identify urban school system needs;

2. Develop and describe roles of the SEA in assisting urban school systems to plan and effect improvements in education; and

3. Develop an operational plan including the description of specific organizational structuring, new or improved SEA/Urban School System relationships, and strategies, processes, and procedures needed for implementing and carrying out the roles and actions required by both the state education agency and the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified.

In the original proposal of the ISLE Project, the staff, Policy Board, and the Project Committee contemplated only a limited study of services provided by, and relations between, state departments of education and urban school systems. It soon became apparent, however, that few state education agencies were making any serious attempts to provide meaningful services to urban school systems. In view of the strong traditions of relative isolation that had been established by the urban school systems, it also became apparent that few if any changes in these traditions were likely to be made merely on the basis of studies and statements by authorities concerning needs and possibilities.

After reviewing this situation with the Policy Board and Project Committee, the Chairman of the Policy Board submitted to the U. S. Office of Education on January 12, 1970, a proposal developed by the project staff for a supplementary grant to assist a few especially interested states in systematically studying present and emerging urban school system problems and possibilities and in attempting to arrive at agreements on how state education agencies could assist in improvements that should be made. The following seven state education agencies participated in this aspect of the project in 1970-71: Colorado, Florida, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. In 1971-72 nine states participated: California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington. In 1972-73 the participating state agencies were: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Texas.

Each participating state education agency appointed a coordinator for the state study. Some states selected an advisory committee to guide the study; all states developed and utilized activities they considered appropriate for their respective states. The variety of approaches, activities, and findings among the states has provided the basis for the analyses and proposals included in this monograph.

Section One

## THE NEED FOR CREATIVE CHANGE

The American society is experiencing unprecedented change and vitality. The scientific, technological, and general knowledge explosions are providing insights and opportunities which men are finding exciting and yet awesome in the rapidity of their occurrence and in their complexity. The democratic dream of the dignity and worth of all individuals is being taken more seriously than ever before in our history. Yet society is faced with many important but unresolved problems, including those of poverty in the midst of affluence; lingering inequitable application of rights and opportunities based upon race, ethnic origin, and sex; a population explosion reflected in the growing density of our urban centers; and the more recent ecological concerns relative to the use and misuse of our resources. The American public is looking to the processes of education to assist in solutions for many of society's problems and is expecting public education to assume a leadership role in bringing about constructive change in all parts of our rapidly changing, dynamic, and complex social system.

The kind of societal leadership expected requires the ability to work with and through the various populations within our society in order to (1) accurately assess the needs of society relative to its value systems, (2) explore the alternatives available for meeting or fulfilling society's needs, (3) devise realistic operational plans for effectively utilizing resources according to the alternatives available, and (4) assist appropriate groups in implementing the plans for meeting or fulfilling the identified societal needs.

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to our democratic system of values. American society has traditionally held that a broadly based and adequately supported system of public education is essential to its preservation. Consistent with our belief in the dignity and worth of all men, we have held that every American child should be given equal opportunity in the public schools to develop his talents to the fullest extent possible, recognizing the wide range of abilities and needs brought to the public schools by our children.

In the past, public education has determined its primary purposes to be that of teaching the three R's, preparing students for college, and transmitting the cultural heritage of this society. Our fluid and expanding society, however, will no longer be well served by these limited traditional programs. American public education must serve those who have a wide variety of learning styles, abilities, and needs. For every student to have meaningful educational opportunities which match his abilities and needs, school systems must plan and develop diversified programs to satisfy diversified needs.

Developing such diversified programs is challenging in all local school systems. However, because of the concentration of diversity and the size of the student populations in urban areas, the challenge is especially acute and places unusual demands and challenges on urban school systems. The Urban Task Force commented in 1970:

> Urban education systems are facing a major challenge to provide appropriate learning experiences for various life styles of their vast numbers of students. The indicators of this challenge are extremely diverse in

> their intensity and scope: student unrest on university campuses and in the high schools, local community groups seeking control of their neighborhood schools, clashes with law enforcement agencies, complaints being filed with regard to use of Federal funds, teachers strikes, voter rejection of large city school bonds issues, the proliferation of alternative plans for educating students, lack of priority for education in state and local governments. By far, the greatest number of such indicators--interacting on and intensifying each other--are taking place in our cities.[1]

More recently, attention was focused on the problems of urban school systems by the contributing authors of Revitalizing Education in the Big Cities.[2] They point to dilemmas faced by big city education and educators and suggest potential ways of resolving them, including the following:

- Quality education amidst the process of ethnic desegregation of schools.
- New visions amidst massive concentrations of previously bypassed people.
- Planning toward the future amidst immediate emergencies.
- Accountability amidst deterrents.
- Burgeoning necessities amidst dwindling resources.
- Effective governance and obsolete structures.
- Concentration and coordination amidst separated endeavors.

The problems and dilemmas of urban school systems are critical, and point with emphasis to the need for creative and purposeful change.

## The Changing Role of State Education Agencies

In times of social and cultural stability, the goals and objectives of various elements of society tend to be stable. Organizational roles and functions of the sub-units of the society reflect this stability.

However, in a time of rapid economic, social and cultural change, organizations within the society must redefine their roles and structures to take advantage of new opportunities in fulfilling the new demands being placed upon them. State education agencies are no exception. In fact, since each state has the major responsibility for developing adequate provisions for public education, state education agencies must provide the necessary leadership and services, as well as the example, needed by local school systems in order to bring about constructive, purposeful change. As noted in an earlier publication of the project, Improving State Leadership in Education:

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[1] "Urban School Crisis," Final Report of the Task Force on Urban Education of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, January 5, 1970, p. 5.

[2] Published by Improving State Leadership in Education, Denver, Colorado.

> If...the state education agency is to assume a bona fide leadership role in education, it must move away from the historic organizational and operational concerns--checking on compliance and doling out both money and advice--to new leadership and service activities that are less bureaucratic, less regulatory, less bound by traditions and structures, and more concerned with planning, development, and change.[3]

This statement clearly indicates the changes state education agencies must make if they are to be responsive to the needs of the times and provide direction and guidance for the changes that must occur if public education is to be relevant to the needs of society. The "new role" calls for providing leadership and services in planning--and helping to plan to meet--future as well as present educational needs.

The fundamental purpose of leadership within an organization consists of assisting in or facilitating the identification and attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization. Long-range as well as short-term planning, therefore, become an integral function of leadership. Planning is a systematic process which includes a comprehensive needs assessment, the setting of desired goals and objectives, the exploration and selection of alternative processes and procedures for achieving the objectives, the development of a systematic schedule of time-related events and activities that are capable of achieving the stated objectives, and a means of evaluation which will provide ongoing feedback on the extent to which the objectives are being achieved.

## STATE EDUCATION AGENCY TASKS[4]

Ways in which the state education agency should assist urban and other local school systems include:

Goals. Provide leadership and services to assist these systems in establishing goals. All goals, developed and accepted by educators and knowledgeable laymen, should be primarily concerned with the improvement of learning environments, opportunities and procedures for the benefit of students.

Policies. Provide leadership in developing policies to serve as guides for future decision-making and action. These must be clearly stated and fully communicated to those within the school system and to the general public.

Planning. Provide leadership in planning needed changes in education. Planning is a systematic process of analyzing problems, identifying unmet or emerging needs and appropriate goals, considering feasible alternatives, and determining the resources and procedures necessary to see that the plans are carried out.

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[3]Kenneth H. Hansen and David L. Jesser, "Society, Education and State Education Agencies: Implications of Societal Changes," in Emerging State Responsibilities for Education, Edgar L. Morphet, David L. Jesser and Arthur P. Ludka, eds. (Denver, Colorado: Improving State Leadership in Education, 1970), p. 20.

[4]Adapted from Clifford L. Dochterman and Barron B. Beshoar, Directions to Better Education (Denver, Colorado: Improving State Leadership in Education, 1970), pp. 13-14.

Priorities. Provide leadership in determining priorities and sequential steps in making needed changes based upon short-, intermediate-, and long-range needs for the improvement of education.

Implementation. Provide leadership in devising specific steps, procedures and strategies for attaining all previously established goals.

Evaluation and Accountability. Provide help in developing appropriate procedures for continuous evaluation of the programs and accomplishments of students at various levels and the effectiveness of plans, programs, and procedures; prepare and disseminate informative reports on progress and problems for all agencies concerned and the general public.

## Some Problems in Large City School Systems

The large urban school systems are faced with all the major problems of public education. Of these, the most pressing in many school systems are: (1) the lack of relevance of curricula in preparing students for living productive lives in our society; (2) inadequate and outdated instructional resources; (3) a lack of differentiated and/or properly trained staff capable of diagnosing and individualizing instruction to meet the diversified needs of the students; (4) rigid bureaucratic structures that tend to resist any type of movement; and (5) in most cases, major problems relating to financial support.

Urban school system concerns and problems vary from those of other school systems in at least two primary ways: (1) size (sheer numbers), and (2) concentration of problems associated with students from poverty and minority backgrounds.

Largeness not only requires that time and labor saving techniques be employed, but it also affords the opportunity for increasing efficiency and accuracy of purpose. Largeness imposes challenges, but also provides opportunities for identifying needed services and economically providing them for students with widely varying needs. Further, largeness provides the opportunity of acquiring specialists in staff support that are not economically possible in smaller situations. Urban school systems should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by largeness. State legislatures should provide the general direction for the educational policies of the state, but the state education agency, together with local school systems, must develop procedures and processes appropriate to the operation of educational programs. Such procedures must contain a degree of flexibility that will allow and encourage all systems to capitalize on the opportunities inherent in their structure.

As the cities have grown in size their population composition has changed. Increasing numbers of white professional and high salaried persons have moved to the suburbs and have been replaced by people from minority and low income groups. This shift in population is taking place at an increasing rate and urban school systems--especially the inner-city schools--are faced with large concentrations of students: (1) who are from impoverished families; (2) who have different self-images and aspirations; and (3) whose needs require goals that differ in many respects from those reflected by the traditional "college-bound" academic orientation of the public schools.

Unfortunately, during the last two decades the demands on urban school systems have increased while their ability to respond to these demands seem to have decreased in many respects. Prior to the Depression and World War II, large cities were in a more favorable financial position than most rural and many suburban areas because they had the largest concentrations of wealth and related resources within the states. However, because of out-migration of business and some professional populations and the in-migration of lower income and economically disadvantaged populations, the situation has changed significantly. Although the needs and related costs in big cities have increased greatly, the economic base either has declined or has not risen as rapidly as in some of the surrounding suburban areas. Because of the changing situation, the quality of many urban school programs, especially in inner-city schools, has not kept pace with the needs or has in fact declined.

In several states a high percentage of the state's school age children reside in a few major urban centers. If present trends continue, the urban school systems, especially the inner-city schools, will become the custodians of the poor, the sick, the unwanted, the disillusioned, the bitter, and the militantly angry. Cooperative and comprehensive planning, plus the focusing of additional resources, will be required if urban school systems are to fulfill their role of providing relevant educational opportunities for their children and our society.

State education agencies are thereby faced with the challenge of developing increased communication and cooperative interaction with the urban school systems in order to help them to identify the concerns and problems and implement the roles the state education agency can perform in assisting the urban systems in resolving these concerns and problems.

## Section Two

## MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

The challenge of creating a partnership between urban school systems and SEA's can be characterized as stimulating organizational and attitudinal change. Such changes require a fundamental alteration in the perceptions of how SEA's regard their roles and functional relationships with the urban school systems and of how urban school systems view their own roles and relations.

Major organizational changes make it necessary to identify new goals, define new tasks, redefine many job descriptions, create new positions, do away with some of the old positions, and restructure organizational relationships and patterns of power.

W. G. Bennis has observed:

> Any significant change in human organization involves a rearrangement of patterns of power, association, status, skills, and values. Some individuals and groups may benefit; others may lose. Some may view an anticipated change as threatening and reject it, and others may view it as 'enhancing' and embrace it. In any case, change typically involves

risk and fear. The trust and support of the change-agent during the period of greatest stress may help to 'ready' the client for the change.[5]

Change requires an expenditure of energy or resources which could be utilized for other purposes. Also, change usually is associated with a feeling of discomfort or uneasiness by those who must change or who will be directly affected. Therefore, it is vital to the success of a change-focused project that those involved openly recognize that (1) a problem exists that appears to require some kind of change, and (2) that a "solution" to the problem seems to be worth the anticipated discomfort and expenditure of energy and resources required to achieve it. Those involved must be able to focus on a problem they are willing to commit their time and resources to resolving.

This commitment to an objective or goal is most assured when the persons within the organization who are to "act" have been involved enough in the development of the organizational goals that they believe: (1) the goals are worthwhile to themselves or to "their group;" (2) that the objectives have not been imposed on them but are of their own making; and (3) that the objectives are attainable.

SEA's have responsibility for state-wide planning. However, the state agencies must be careful not to do the planning for local school systems. Rather, the SEA's should provide models, and should assist local school systems in a manner that encourages them to do their own planning.

The following points should be kept constantly in mind as plans are developed to bring about organizational and attitudinal change:

1. Purposeful change is oriented toward resolving a problem whose outcome will result in the achievement of a worthwhile objective;

2. All processes and procedures utilized to explore and identify the problem, to set goals and objectives, and to determine means of achieving and evaluating the changes expected must include the involvement of those who are to be involved in changing or bringing about the change; and

3. A systematic program of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation gives the purposeful planner greater control of the environmental factors affecting success and, therefore, greatly increases the probability of achieving the objectives that are desired.

## A Model for Change

Changes in organizational objectives, policies and procedures, personnel, and communication and power structures will be required to a greater or lesser degree. Thus, the following assumptions are important.

1. State education agencies and urban school systems must increase their problem-solving capability.

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[5]Warren G. Bennis, Changing Organizations (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 105.

2. Achieving long-term improvement at the teaching-learning level requires that compatible changes be made in the several sub-systems of the state's educational system.

3. The ultimate criterion of the success of a state's educational system is the performance of students; however, a wide variety of short-term criteria are necessary to achieve efficient management and to ensure that continuous progress is made.

Major SEA organizational change requires the establishment of a procedure to provide for:

1. A needs assessment to identify and assign priority ratings to the concerns and problems of urban school systems in the state as seen now and projected over the next decade;

2. The development and description of the roles the state education agency should perform in assisting the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified;

3. The development of a plan--including the description of specific organizational structuring, strategies, processes, and procedures needed--for implementing and carrying out the roles and actions required by both the state education agency and the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified; and

4. The implementation of the planned changes.

Any effort to deal, in an effective manner, with the problems of urban education must be considered as a major undertaking and will probably require a time span of several years. Because of this, some states may desire to establish an Office of Urban Education to lead the effort, while other states may prefer a more minimal investment of time and resources. In such cases, several features of the procedural elements or suggested guidelines which follow might be omitted or utilized in various alternative arrangements. Each state should generate and examine feasible alternatives and decide which alternative is best suited for its needs and objectives.

## SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

Based on the experiences and findings of the participating states of the Urban Aspect of the ISLE Project, enriched through the advice and guidance provided by the ISLE Project Staff, the Project Committee, and Policy Board, the following guidelines have been developed for use of states seeking suggestions as to ways of providing services and improving the relations of their state education agency with their urban school systems.

*The probability of success in any SEA/Urban school system effort will be enhanced when staff and organizational arrangements are such that:*

- The Chief School Officer and the State Board of Education are involved in and are supportive of SEA/Urban goals, objectives, and activities.

- The superintendents (not representatives) and boards of education of the major urban school systems are involved in and are supportive of the SEA/Urban goals, objectives, and activities.

- A competent and representative advisory committee, including lay citizens as well as professional educators, is created, and is capable of reflecting and shaping the public's desires and expectations relating to urban education.

- The Chief State School Officer clearly defines the role of the staff member responsible for the urban education effort, and appoints a qualified person to the position.

- Sub-committees and/or special task forces are formed, as appropriate, to accomplish specific tasks, and when the membership of these groups consists of state agency staff, urban school system staff, and lay public representation.

- The urban education coordinator or "specialist" is perceived by urban system superintendents as having both status and stature in the SEA.

  The position of an urban education "specialist" would have at least three basic functions:

  1. Assisting the chief state school officer in ensuring that all programs and policies of the SEA are compatible with the documented needs of education in the urban school systems;

  2. Assisting urban school systems in identifying and meeting the real needs of the residents of those systems; and

  3. Maintaining continous liaison with all appropriate external agencies, groups, and individuals having a legitimate interest in the quality of public education in urban school systems.

Since the programs and services of the state education agency must serve both urban and non-urban systems, the role of the new urban education specialist should not be that of a program administrator, but instead should be concerned with all of the programs, services, and units of the entire SEA. Therefore, this position organizationally should be designated as a staff position to the chief state school officer rather than as a line position in an administrative unit. The person assigned to this position should: possess interpersonal skills; be very knowledgeable about the staff and programs of the SEA and the leadership and programs of the urban systems; have ability to effectively reach out to and obtain the assistance and cooperation of the lay public and non-educational agencies which provide resources and services that are available for, and are needed to, improve education in urban districts; and have the ability to relate educational needs to the lay public as well as to official policy making bodies such as the state board of education, legislature, governor, and federal officials.

*The probability of success in any SEA/Urban school system effort will be enhanced when goals and objectives are:*

- Compatible with the overall goals of the state education agency.
- Compatible with the overall goals of the urban school systems.
- Compatible with the general public's desires and expectations, regarding public education.
- Inclusive of: (1) a description of the concerns and problems of urban school systems as seen now and projected over the next decade; (2) a description of the roles the SEA should perform in assisting the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified; and (3) a plan including a description of specific organizational restructuring, strategies, processes, and procedures for implementing and carrying out the roles and actions required by both the SEA and the urban school systems in resolving the major concerns and problems identified.

*The probability of success in any SEA/Urban school system effort will be enhanced if the effort is so structured as to provide that:*

- The top administrators of both the urban school systems and the SEA have a direct interest and involvement in the SEA/Urban effort.
- The lay public is listened to, and attention is given to their desires and expectations.
- There exists or develops an open recognition by both SEA and urban school system personnel that the working relationships between the organizations need to be improved.
- An atmosphere of good faith exists, or is developed; an atmosphere in which an open and frank identification and discussion of problem areas and relationshops can take place based upon a sincere desire for constructive and positive improvement by all parties involved.
- SEA staff members are in a position to develop meaningful working relationships with urban school systems based upon on-site visits.
- SEA staff members become knowledgeable and understanding of the special concerns and problems associated with urban school systems.
- The SEA develops effective processes and procedures for working with legislators to achieve continuing change in state policies for education in order to meet the needs of the citizens of the state and to insure appropriate allocation of resources to meet these needs.

## Section Three

## INSIGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

The experiences of those participating in the Urban Aspect of the ISLE Project have provided many insights and observations which may be helpful to those states desiring to implement the changes discussed in the previous section.

SEA Organizational Considerations

There is no question but that a person or persons in a power position in the SEA must desire to see improvements take place. In addition to the Chief State School Officer (CSSO), the support and understanding of the State Board of Education and the state commissioner's chief assistants is essential. Lay public support also is important in achieving success in an SEA/Urban effort. This may take any number of forms, but it essentially provides the SEA or the SEA change agent with leverage. In Ohio, for example, an Urban Developemnt Commission was established. This Commission studies pressing problems of urban education and, through the Assistant Superintendent for Urban Education, makes recommendations to the SEA and the Legislature. The Commission is composed of business, professional, and religious leaders and has such prestige in the State that its recommendations are always given serious consideration.

In other cases, some other type of advisory committee may be established. The breadth of its base and its stature will likely determine its value in helping to bring about change.

Several alternative organizational approaches have been used by the states engaged in this project. At least three states have appointed an Assistant Commissioner (Superintendent) for Urban Affairs (or Urban Education). In some of these states, the person had performed many of the change agent activities, in addition to other duties, prior to his appointment. In Texas, the initial work was done by a director in the Office of Planning with the assistance of an outside consultant. After a year, the Office of Urban Education was established and an Assistant Commissioner was appointed to give full time attention to this effort. In New Jersey, a special assistant to the state superintendent was appointed to initiate the SEA/Urban effort. Later, an Office of Urban Education was created within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction and a new Director was appointed.

Particular circumstances may dictate what is best in each case. There would appear to be distinct advantages, however, in having an Office of Urban Education established and further advantages in having that Office headed by an Assistant Commissioner--or a position of equal status with that of other top-level SEA staff. This arrangement provides a focal point for urban concerns and a spokesman within the SEA for urban needs. It also provides staff whose full time can be directed to the change process. Perhaps less obvious but most important, such a move by the state board, the legislature or the state commissioner provides clear and unmistakable signals to the entire state education agency, to the urban school systems, and to the general public as well, that a new priority has been established. Such signals cause others to rethink their own positions and to facilitate (or at least be receptive to) improvements relative to urban school systems.

SEA/Urban School System Relationships

Gaining the support and participation of urban superintendents may sometimes be difficult. They are not likely to be very much interested in "another academic exercise" or "another SEA transient interest." A sincerely communicated desire on the part of the SEA to be of more real service to urban systems should encourage participation of urban superintendents. Inviting urban superintendents to serve on an advisory committee is one way of opening and maintaining communication with them. Sustaining their interest and participation will require that results be obtained--that progress in resolving urban problems be made.

Several of the points made previously affect urban school system participation--the signals generated from the SEA top policy or administration level, the interest apparent in the legislature, State Board, Advisory Committee, or Commissioner. Since these developments may occur serially in time, more effort may have to be directed toward gaining participation in some states than in others.

The approach by SEA staff which has proven most effective in gaining support of urban superintendents has been personal visits to the urban systems. Urban school system personnel are accustomed to receiving bulletins, rules and regulations, etc., by mail. They also are accustomed to visits by SEA monitoring and accreditation teams. They are not accustomed to a high level representative from the SEA sincerely asking in person, "How can the SEA better serve you now and over the next decade?" This is likely to be a unique event in an urban superintendent's professional life. Positive and productive relationships have been established through use of this approach.

Furthermore, this "on-site" interaction is indispensable, because that is where the action is. A thorough understanding of the concerns and problems of urban school systems is essential, and this cannot be gained in any vicarious manner. SEA personnel can and must facilitate meaningful discussions with urban system superintendents and their staffs. Not only are the urban school personnel more likely to be open and frank, but much of the information will be more meaningful when it is personally transmitted by those people directly involved and when the information is directly related to the setting in which it is being transmitted. Visits and interaction with urban superintendents and their staffs likely will serve to identify many problems--both long- and short-range--that need to be resolved.

The primary role of the person designated as an SEA/Urban Education "specialist" will be that of a facilitator. His office will, of necessity, suggest and encourage needed changes. Some of these changes will be sufficiently small that change can be brought about through personal diplomacy. Some changes will require systematic study and revision of SEA and federal regulations, state board policies, and state and federal laws. In other to effect these changes special task forces can be formed, as appropriate. The membership of these groups should consist of state agency, urban school system, and lay public representatives who are working cooperatively toward the solution of common problems. This is highly important in changing attitudes and evolving new roles and relationships.

Many concerns and problems facing urban education will, of course, require legislative action if they are to be effectively solved or ameliorated. Appropriate processes and procedures for working with legislatures and legislative proposals should be developed as rapidly as possible with regard to the long-term nature of such a relationship.

Out of a study of the needs, problems, and strengths of urban school systems should emerge an identification of the roles the SEA should perform and the relationships that should be developed between the SEA and urban school systems. Having set this process in motion, the SEA/Urban education specialist will have primary responsibility for assisting the SEA in performing its new roles and in assisting it in developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with urban districts.

## Section Four

## SUMMARY

Urban school systems are faced with all the major problems of public education--including the lack of relevance of curricula, inadequate and outdated instructional resources, and a lack of differentiated and/or properly trained staff capable of diagnosing and individualizing instruction to meet the diversified needs of students. These problems are intensified in most urban school systems because of large concentrations of students with diversified needs associated with low income and minority backgrounds.

Unfortunately, during the last two decades the demands on urban school systems have increased while their ability to respond to these demands seems to have decreased. Cooperative and comprehensive planning plus the focusing of additional resources are required if urban school systems are to provide relevant educational opportunities for their children. State education agencies are faced with the challenge of developing increased communication and cooperative interaction with the urban school systems in order to understand the concerns and problems of urban school systems and to identify and implement the roles the state education agency can perform in assisting in resolving these concerns and problems.

Moreover urban school systems may need to reconsider, and perhaps in some cases to reorient their own roles and relations as one means of helping to effect needed improvements in education not only in the cities but perhaps throughout the state.